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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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15 March 1966

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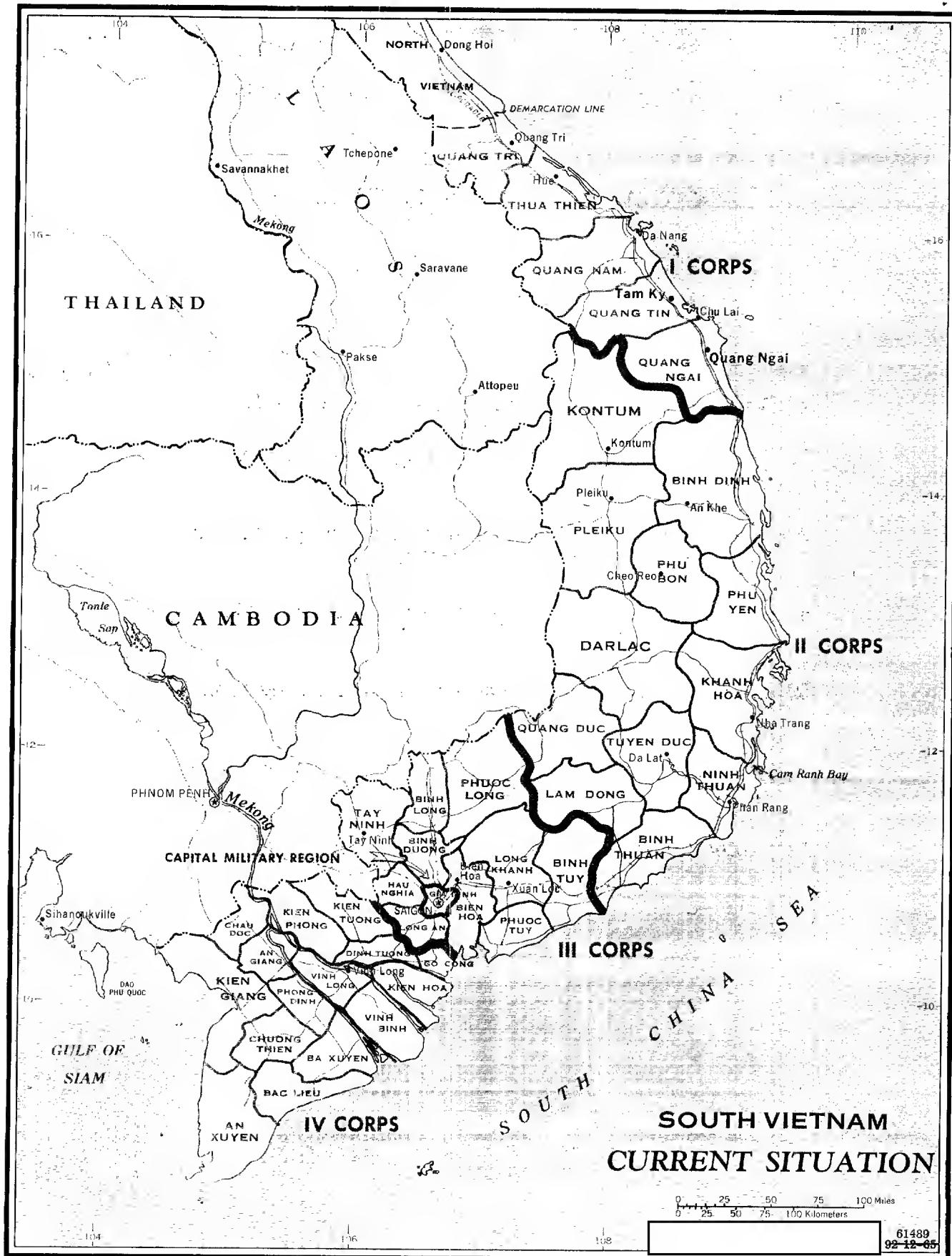
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\*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: Political unrest in I Corps yesterday spread to some towns not previously reported to have been affected, but the demonstrations remained orderly with no evidence of wide public support. There was agitation in Quang Ngai city and in Tam Ky yesterday for the first time, and a commercial strike may be attempted today in Quang Ngai.

Approximately 5,000 persons gathered outside a Buddhist pagoda yesterday morning in Hué, apparently in response to a recent Buddhist Institute communique. Banners demanding an end to military rule and calling for civilian elections were conspicuous. There was little evidence that the dismissal of General Thi was at issue.

In Saigon, Premier Ky continues to appear confident of his position, and feels that his conversations with Buddhist leaders should keep them in line. Ky remains somewhat skeptical of his new I Corps commander, General Chuan, although Chuan's order forbidding troops to take part in demonstrations appears to have been effective yesterday. However, [redacted]

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[redacted] some local officials were secretly aiding political agitators. Should the leadership in I Corps prove ineffective, Buddhists, local political factions, and other groups may begin in earnest to exploit the limited unrest in the area.]

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: There have been no reports of significant military developments in South Vietnam during the past 24 hours.

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Communist China: There are indications that Mao Tse-tung may be seriously ill or incapacitated.

He has been out of public view and his personal activities have gone unreported in the Chinese press since 26 November 1965, while at the same time adulatory comment about him has increased. For the month and a half before 26 November, he received an occasional foreign visitor in an undisclosed location, probably his winter retreat at Hangchow in East China.

Mao's current absence of more than 15 weeks exceeds his longest previous recorded absence. This took place in 1956-57, when he is believed to have suffered a minor stroke.

There have been a number of high-level visitors to Peking recently of the kind that Mao saw regularly before 26 November. His failure to greet such visitors increases the possibility that he is seriously ill.

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Congo (Brazzaville): The radical Brazzaville regime evidently is facing mounting pressure as a result of economic difficulties and discontent within the army.

Diplomatic sources in neighboring Leopoldville consider the situation more unstable than at any time since Abbe Youlou's government was overthrown in 1963. The government lacks funds to meet current operating expenses, and has not paid its employees, other than police, railway workers, and army officers, since last December.

According to the Leopoldville sources, considerable tension has built up between President Massamba-Debat and the army over his use of Cuban nationals in the Presidential Guard. The army considers it an insult to have foreigners serving in this capacity, and last week detained its own commander when he refused to demand the withdrawal of the Cubans.

Cubans have been training Brazzaville's paramilitary forces since early last fall, and apparently first appeared guarding the presidential palace last December when rumors circulated that a coup was about to be attempted. In late December, Massamba-Debat dismissed the gendarmerie commander, reshuffled the cabinet, and reassumed direct control of the armed forces in an effort to stay on top of the situation.

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NOTES

Kenya: The ouster of leftist Vice President Oginga Odinga from the second-ranking position in Kenya's leading political party struck a heavy blow to his ambition to succeed Jomo Kenyatta in the presidency, but he will retain considerable political influence. Odinga has been one of the main channels for the flow of Communist funds into Kenya. He may now face a move for his ouster from the vice presidency, but is talking of using a new party to recoup his waning strength.

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Yemen: King Faysal has rejected Nasir's demand that the Yemeni republicans have a preponderant voice in any interim government, but has instructed his ambassador in Cairo to keep the dialogue going. Nasir is concerned that any concession might be interpreted as stemming from a weakness in his domestic position. If the deadlock persists he might act precipitously and destroy any chance of a settlement.

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Chile: Chile's principal labor confederation, the Communist/Socialist-led Chilean Workers' Central, has called for a nationwide work stoppage today. The strike is to protest a clash on 11 March between troops and armed copper workers which resulted in several killed and wounded. The incident, unusual in Chile, has produced a general sense of shock. It is uncertain to what further length the union is willing to go in challenging the government's new "get tough" policy toward strikes which endanger the administration's economic development program.

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